

Talking Points

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For

International Conference on Illicit Tobacco Trade

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It is my honor today to welcome delegates from all over the world to the United States. I bring you greetings from Secretary Tommy Thompson, the head of the Department of Health and Human Services. He congratulates you for the important and difficult work you do. Secretary Thompson and I hope you have a most productive meeting in New York City.

You are here to discuss ways to reduce smuggling and other illicit tobacco trade. That is a most important element in the comprehensive program to reduce tobacco use worldwide.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other agencies of the United States government are strongly committed to the goal of reducing tobacco use in our country and all other countries. The President has proposed almost \$1 billion to be spent within HHS in *03 to combat tobacco-related health issues.

We at HHS and my colleague, Dr. Kenneth Bernard are leading the U.S. delegation to negotiate at the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We thank them for their efforts. We also thank our hosts today, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for hosting this meeting and for serving with us on that delegation.

We are very pleased that ATF is taking the lead in discussing ways to reduce tobacco smuggling. Tobacco smuggling is a health problem as well as a law enforcement problem and we are committed to working with our colleagues at Justice to impede illicit tobacco trade. By evading taxes, smuggled cigarettes

reduce the price of tobacco, increase demand, and undermine health policies seeking to reduce the use of tobacco. Stopping smuggling can assist in our joint efforts to protect people from secondhand smoke, help people to stop smoking, and is a necessary part of any national comprehensive tobacco control program.

In addition to being the focal point within the U.S. government for reducing the health impact of tobacco domestically, we also work extensively with our and your colleagues in health ministries in many of your countries.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one of the agencies within our department, is spending \$2.6 million this year and next on global tobacco control. They are partnering with almost 150 countries to carry out the Global Youth Tobacco Survey and the Global Health Professional Survey, providing important information about tobacco use in your countries. The CDC is helping with research on bidis, a product used widely in certain parts of the world, and also on smoking and tuberculosis. They are in partnership with the World Bank in Indonesia and Vietnam. They are working with WHO to promote tobacco-free sports, examples being the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah and the World Cup Soccer games recently completed in Japan and Korea. And they are helping build program capacity through such projects as the seminar for Francophone Africa Media Professionals.

The Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health will be making grants of almost \$4 million a year for the next 5 years to tobacco research projects around the world. The 12 winning projects will be announced sometime in August. These projects will help countries learn more about tobacco use and ways to combat it and share that knowledge with tobacco control professionals everywhere. The Secretary has recently rechartered his Cessation Subcommittee of the Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health as a critical element in combating nicotine addiction.

The contribution that this conference will make to the cause of tobacco control, is potentially very important. We wish you well and look forward to reading the final report of your deliberations.